



## **Practical advice and tips for employees working from home**

*Working from home can be very different to working in an office. Read on for some ideas for ways to make it easier for you, including safety advice.*

### **Find the right environment for working from home**

- Choose a suitable location to work away from distractions, such as the TV or radio
- Make sure the temperature where you are working is comfortable and the light is adequate.

### **Look after your mental health when working from home**

- Working in isolation can be stressful, so make sure you keep in contact with your manager daily
- Make a daily plan: embed some structure and increase your wellbeing:
  - Schedule a team call to identify key tasks and priorities
  - Take regular breaks and exercise during a break
  - When you finish work, pack away all your equipment, separating your 'work day' from your 'home time'.
- Stay connected: group emails and calls can maintain our sense of social connectedness, which is vital for wellbeing. A short coffee-break call is a great way to stay connected with each other if your schedules allow.
- If you feel isolated or worried, speak to your manager
- Look after yourself, try to eat lunch and snacks at the same time as you usually would and move away from your workspace to eat. Getting up and moving around will keep you focused and energised
- Give yourself permission to take a break if you become tired
- Set a self-care routine to complement your work schedule, to help you refresh and stay focused when you need to.

## **Managing work distractions when working from home**

- If you have children at home, try to work to a schedule, with a partner if they're at home too, to flex your working time to look after them. Don't feel guilty about spending time with them, as they may feel confused about the changes that are happening and you won't work well if they aren't happy
- Older children can use audio books and videos to occupy themselves and do school work
- Take advantage of little ones having a nap to work and give yourself a break
- Find a balance – if you have carer duties and then work, do what you can. Don't work long hours, ask for help and speak to your manager about any issues you face
- Work in a flexible way. It may be easier for you to work earlier in the morning or later in the evening
- Try to keep social media and chatting to friends at bay until you take a break. Do keep in touch, but not so they or you distract each other
- Some people find it helpful to have the radio on, but try to keep the volume down and if the TV is on, position yourself where you cannot see it, but can listen to it.

## **Setting a comfortable workstation when working from home**

- If you do not have an office chair, use supportive seating, such as a dining room chair. If you sit on soft seating, use a small cushion to support your lower back
- Where possible, position your laptop on a table or work surface rather than your lap, making sure surface is a reasonable height
- Use any laptop accessories that you may have, for example, a separate mouse and keyboard or laptop stands
- Take regular breaks away from your workstation before you get tired
- Do some stretching and energising exercises and stand up regularly. Include blinking, rolling your eyes and looking into the distance to help reduce eyestrain.

## **Your safety when working from home**

- Make sure the cabling from your laptop or other work device aren't trip hazards
- Keep your work area tidy and remove items, such as shoes, that you could trip over
- Don't overload electrical sockets and only use extension leads if absolutely necessary
- Make sure you switch off and unplug all work devices at the end of the day
- If you suspect there's a problem with any work electrical devices, report this to your manager and don't use it
- Check your smoke alarms are working and change the batteries if you need to
- Always make sure you have a plan of action in case of an emergency and share this with other members of the household.